

the middle Rhine Valley, is uncertain—professor at Erfurt and preacher at Worms about the same period, he had read for his master's degree, and Wesel combated the doctrine of indulgence, emphasised the necessity of faith, and inveighed against the corruption of the hierarchy, as strenuously as Luther himself. For these opinions he was tried as a heretic by the Archbishop of Mainz in 1479, and, though he agreed to recant and ask for mercy, he was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment in the Augustinian monastery at Mainz. John of Wessel anticipated Luther in a still more remarkable degree, as the Wittenberg reformer acknowledged after his writings came into his hands. Like Erasmus, Wessel was a wandering scholar, and his steps as ambient scholar and theologian may be traced to Cologne, Paris, Rome, Basel, Heidelberg, and finally to Zwolle, where he had been educated in the school of the Brethren. Like Luther, he was a born fighter—the Master of Contradictions—and slew the Realists in many a stout encounter, as champion of the Nominalists, at Cologne, Paris, and elsewhere. And, like Luther, he did battle against more practical abuses than the subtleties of the Realists. He maintained the supreme authority of Scripture. He taught the doctrines of justification by faith and the priesthood of believers. He emphasised the fallibility of the pope. He professed a doctrine of the Eucharist analogous to that of Zwingli, and therefore too rational for Luther. He rejected masses for the dead, and, in short, appears to have been a combination of Luther and Zwingli fully a quarter of a century before they were born. The wonder is that the Dominicans of Cologne and Louvain did not burn him. They must either have been napping, or the Master of Contradictions must have been accounted too dangerous an antagonist to be tackled. At any rate, he died in peace in 1489 at Groningen. Duke Charles, who, as Charles V., thundered the imperial ban against Luther at the Diet of Worms, made up for this remissness by a series of vigorous persecuting edicts against "the Lutherans" in his Netherland dominions. As in France and England, the term "Lutheran" denoted all heretics—the followers of Calvin and Zwingli as well as of Luther—during the earlier Reformation movement. Humanists like Hoen and Rode allied themselves with Zwingli as well as Luther,